--Part Two--

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SOME LAWS OF THE ROAD.

Facts That Are Not Known by All Who Go Upon the Highways.

Utica Observer.

The talk of the many thousands is often turned toward the law of the road, for there is no one who does not make use of roads either to ride, drive or walk upon. For the protection of the traveling public it is necessary that certain rules regulating travel upon the public highways be generally observed.

Our statutes do not require a traveler to keep upon any particular part of the road, nor to turn out in any certain direction, but it is the universal custom in this country for vehicles and animals under the charge of a man to take the right side of the road when meeting others, if it is reasonably practical to do so. A team should, in general, keep the right side, whether meeting another or not. Yet, when two are going in the same direction and one wishes to pass the other, he should pass on the left side, as the first team has the right of way and cannot be expected to deviate from his course upon the right side. One passing another must use great care to avoid a collision, as nothing but necessity will warrant him in doing this, for both, going in the same direction, belong upon the right side, and by any deviation from his proper side one assumes all risk of the experiment. The rule must be very strictly observed at night, for when, by reason of storm or fog, it might be difficult to distinguish others approaching.

A traveler on foot or on horseback must give away to a vehicle and a lightly loaded team must give way to a heavily loaded one, but a team with a very heavy load ought, in certain cases, to stand still, so as to allow a lighter vehicle to pass. The driver of a horse must use ordinary care in its management, and is liable for all damage caused by careless driving, and if he leaves his team he must use ordinary care in hitching it, for if a horse left unhitched starts and occasions damage the responsibility rests upon him who neglected in hitching it. But if a team is hitched with ordinary care and is frightened by some unusual disturbance, as a runaway team running against it, and the team so hitched breaks away and in turn runs and causes damage, no liability rests upon him who carefully hitched his horse.

The movement of sleighs and sleds upon the snow being comparatively noiseless, it is customary at attach bells to them or to the horses, and the want of bells would render a person liable for damages. Bicycles are regarded as vehicles and are subject to the same rules—they must give way to heavier vehicles, and foot passengers must, in turn, give way to them. Massachusetts laws require bells to be attached to all bicycles. As no one is obliged to build fences next to the highway, the use of which is common to all people who choose to travel upon it, so drovers of cattle and other animals are not responsible for damage by their traveling herds, if reasonable care be exercised in their management.

A Skinner.

Puck.

Grimshaw (in the chair)—You haven't been a barber long, have you?

Barber (with dignity)—I have been working at my present profession fourteen years.

Grimshaw—H'm! I should have supposed you had been a taxidermist up till within the last half hour

THE MIGHTY MISSISSIPPI

A STUDY OF THE GREAT RIVER FROM CAIRO TO NEW ORLEANS.

An Irresistible Flood Which Is Spreading Devastation Over a Fertile and Prosperous Region.

In the 762 miles between Cairo and Natchez there are only eight hills upon the river bank. These are at Columbus and Hickman, Ky.; Fort Pillow, Randolph and Memphis, Tenn.; Helena, Ark., and Vicksburg and Natchez, Miss. Helena has the only hill on the west side of the river. The chain of hills belonging to a river country are here, but are from twenty to sixty miles inland and the river claims the intervening "bottoms" as its own in the floodtide, although in the normal condition it takes but a narrow channel. Even in the lower water, however, the river has so shallow a bed that it is as if laid upon the top of the land instead of being imbedded as it should be.

In the distant past it did not matter that "the father of waters" spread out his great flood. There were few people in the lowlands to suffer, and they had nothing to depend upon to save them, hence they saved themselves. The river was not confined, so it covered the whole district and quickly disappeared. For a hundred years, however, the State of Louisiana has had levees and thus has wrested from the wide-spreading river her most valuable lands—the riverside plantations. Gradually the levee system has crept northward until the river is bounded by levees from the gulf to the Ohio like a mill race. The people now feel it is safe to go into the bottom lands and make homes. Great plantations, with their marvelous following of laborers, have been established. Towns and even cities have been built, and all depend upon the levee for protection from the water. The country above in the meantime has become settled, deforested and drained, so that the levees are insufficient to cope with the sudden overflow, and, consequently, suffering must come.

The Mississippi river affects twenty-one States and is a national highway. The government has absolute control over all questions concerning its navigation, and has entered into co-operation with the States in the construction and maintenance of the levees. It has set aside large forest reservations in the North and has a large corps of civil engineers and surveyors in the river districts, besides controlling about 25 per cent. of the cost of the levee work. It is proposed that a bill be introduced in Congress asking the United States government to take entire charge of the levees, as Holland does of the dikes of the German ocean. In some ways this is not advisable, for it would shoulder all responsibility and expense on Uncle Sam, and the people living behind the levees would lose the interest that is essential to the maintenance of the levees. There are many plans discussed at every flood-time concerning the construction of levees—brick levees, wooden levees, rock levees and no levees at all being suggested. Outlets for the water into the back lakes and lowlands, enlargement of the mouth of the river, and the opening of the bayous are also suggested.

TWO OPINIONS.

No levees at all is the cry of a large number of people, although not the majority. They assert that each farmer should have a mound thrown up on which to store, feed and house his family and stock, and the river, having so large an area over which to spread, would never get deep in any place and would quickly drain off. As the river always leaves a deposit of dirt and sand several inches deep they argue that the land will gradually build higher. But, say the levecites, confine the river and make it dig its own channel and bed deeper—which it does not seem to do.

The river, however, is a law unto itself, and has known no rival in its irregularities. It is built upon the sand, and is, consequently, shifting. It is so varying that the pilots do not expect to navigate two trips in the same channel, therefore have an association and a system by which they keep themselves informed. They make notes of all changes and deposit them in lockboxes at each landing, where the pilots coming from the opposite direction may read them. Sand bars spring up in the most unexpected places and in the shortest possible time. As soon as they appear above the water the willows grow all over them. They are then called "towheads." If they last twenty-one years they attain the dignified title of "island." But few of them live the prescribed time, for they gradually waste away and disappear. So, also, do the islands disappear, even after they have lived for years and have been under cultivation.

A DESTRUCTIVE STREAM.

This peculiar river does not stop making and unmaking islands. It cuts into the land in a most reckless fashion. Places that have been on the river bank are from one to four miles inland, and inland towns have come to the front and then had to retreat. As before stated, the river is built on shifting sand, and wherever a point projects into the river, the eddy forms in the curve on the down side of the river, and there it whirls until it digs almost under to the other side. The current on the upper side is wearing through also, until the water first begins to seep, then to trickle, and, finally, with a grand rush, it breaks through, and a new "cut-off" is made. There are twenty of these on record and are important, as these points are many miles around and a very few miles across. For instance, the points of land upon which the New Madrid stands is thirty-five miles around and eight miles across. One would think the river would become shorter in a half century, but it makes as many loops as "cut-offs," and in working these changes makes and unmakes men's fortunes. At a certain place in Kentucky a point has been cut off so that the river first flows through Kentucky, then several miles in Tennessee, and again several miles in Kentucky, and again in Tennessee. This peculiar little jut of land is called by river men "Little Kentucky."

We came in sight of the flood at Paducah, Ky., near which the Cumberland and Tennessee join with the Ohio. The Mississippi curves at Cairo, Ill., receiving the Ohio on the top of the curve. This gives the Ohio the appearance of a straight river receiving the Mississippi, but the color of the water tells a different story. The Mississippi is a dark, muddy, sullen, yellow stream, and the Ohio a clear, red yellow. For many miles the two kinds of waters flow along side by side without mixing, the color line showing plainly, but the dark, muddy yellow gradually overcomes the reddish water and the latter disappears.

Throughout Kentucky and Tennessee we saw the vast spread of waters. The rail fences were taken down and stacked on high platforms built upon piling. The houses were submerged, some showing only chimneys and cone of roof, some surrounded by water up to the tops of doors, and some with it only to the doorsteps. And how pathetic these abandoned houses looked, the doors and windows open, the curtains flapping with the wind, and the water pouring through. We saw numberless cribs of corn and stacks of hay watersoaked and toppling, the bygone year of hard work and fruitful harvest laid waste. How hopeless must be the owners, who, however, had escaped with their families and stock.

REAL SUFFERING.

When we reached Mississippi and Arkansas, however, we saw the real suffering of people and animals. Here the people had depended upon the levees and clung to their homes, hoping that each inch of rise would be the last, and that each hour would show the danger past. Instead came the frightful crevasses, which filled the country with water sixty miles wide and from six to twenty feet deep. The narrow line of crumbling levee then was the only spot of earth left to stand upon, and from this, the house tops and branches of trees these poor people were rescued. There was little loss of life reported by the news gatherers. Aye, true, little loss in comparison to the great number saved. No terrible catastrophe, where hundreds went at once, but go into the camps where the rescued can tell the stories, and to the mother whose babe fell from her arms and was swept away, or to the child who saw the aged mother stand two days in water waist deep and then fall. To them the tragedy is as great as if the world had heard of hundreds drowning at once.

Farther south we came upon the people waiting to be succored. They so feared that the waves from our steamer would wreck their little foothold that they waved frantically for us to go slowly and keep as far away as possible, and they continued to cling to the narrow strip of levee. At two places the only footing above the water were sawdust piles from sawmills close at hand, with only the pipes out of water. On these piles were little white tents, from which we saw women and children peeping, and horses, cattle, chickens and pigs were crowding around them. "When one of the animals went overboard," said a rescued man, "we had to shoot it or fight it off until it drowned, for its frantic struggles caved our insecure foothold."

Floating houses, wagons, fences, light machinery, lumber, grain and animals were to be seen everywhere near the shore. They seemed to be whirled about in a current apart from the great swell of water in the main channel, and were finally lodged in the trees. Even the trees appealed to your sympathy, standing waist deep in the muddy, frothy water, and made to receive such burdens of woe.

Below Memphis we came upon the people who were fighting to save their levees. Back of them we could see the plowed ground, with fresh green growing close to it in even rows, and the horsemen sentinels galloping up and down in frantic haste. Men and women were carrying sacks of sand and piling them either longwise down the bank on the river side or laying them crosswise on the top of the banks. These were then plastered together with mud. For two days we were shot at to keep us from landing, and were met in midstream with barges to receive our freight, and men came in canoes for the papers and mail.

BREAKING OF A LEVEE.

Late one afternoon, after such a day, we heard a roar that sounded like a mighty wind. We knew that a crevasse had come, and sure enough, there it frothed and foamed, a veritable Niagara. The water fell twenty feet, but oh! the force of it, crowded by all that giant water course behind it, caused it to take away twelve hundred feet of levee, and we went out of sight with the roar still loud in our ears. Greenville and Rosedale and a great part of the levee that was so well guarded was flooded after we passed through. Below Baton Rouge is what is called "the coast." Here the levees are years and years old, and so well made and guarded that if levees can hold the water at all these will stand; but the greatest anxiety was felt, and was not only felt in the country, but in the city of New Orleans. That city is certainly in grave danger from any great overflow, with Lake Ponchartrain behind it and the river on three sides of it, and only mud banks to protect it.

When we had arrived at New Orleans the overflow water was returning to the Mississippi through the Yazoo and other rivers that flow into the Mississippi below the Red river, so that the rise in one day at Vicksburg was four feet. It is said that if the supreme moment comes when it is felt that the levees will break at New Orleans, they will be cut above, where there will be least danger to human life, but what an awful risk to await a supreme moment when so many lives depend upon banks of mud only twelve feet thick.

At Memphis we saw the flood sufferers in the camps provided for them. The colored people were in what is called "Camp Congo." They are in tents in low ground, so that after all they are living in the water. The white people are in old buildings. I saw eighty-five in two small rooms. There was not even a chair or other piece of furniture. Ticks filled with straw made the beds, and mill sacks, filled with straw, the pillows. The covers had been donated, and were clean, but faded, ragged and old. The people are sheltered, warmed and fed, but the misery is woeful. Every one is sick. In one room there is an epidemic, the measles, in a bad form. In the other are people sick from exposure, and not a comfort of any kind—not even a clean rag. Everyone has sore eyes. They all appear to be dazed, and "hopeless" does not express the look of despair and vacancy upon their faces. I saw a mother and father sitting on either side of a straw bed, upon which lay a babe of two years parched with fever, and scarlet with measles. They were not even able to raise their eyes, and the tears simply dropped down their faces without a change of muscle. One could not gaze upon such suffering long and we turned away from the place with the feeling that we had indeed looked upon direful misery.

One can hardly surmise what will become of this mass of sad humanity, but it is supposed that they will return to their former lands and make the best of what is left. If the water recedes in time, a crop can yet be planted, for the seasons are long there, but they will have not even the seed for the new beginning.

The Fiction Habit.

Buffalo Courier.

A taste for studious reading cannot be cultivated in everybody. A vast number cannot bring themselves to it any more than they can bring themselves to enjoy any music above a band concert or any play above a farce-comedy. It isn't in them. But since they will read novels, and most of them go to the public libraries for their supplies, the library can do some good by putting the right sort of novels into their hands and denying them the wrong sort. The librarian of the Carnegie Library has lately disposed of many of the novels of Mrs. Holmes, Mrs. Southworth, A. E. Gunter and E. P. Roe—works which are not in the least pernicious, but are dreadfully vapid and shallow. There has been some protest against this proceeding, but so long as the librarian keeps good fiction on his shelves he is quite justified in getting rid of that which is worthless. If one were to go to work to read all the really excellent novels to be found in any public library, he would have his life's work cut out for him. There are the multitudes of good novels in England, to say nothing of the vast accumulations of translations of those in other tongues, and it is pretty difficult to read more than a hundred novels a year.

Question of the Hour.

Pittsburg Chronicle Telegraph.

Once more the engrossing question is: "What's the score?"

STORIES OF GEN. GRANT

JOHN RUSSELL YOUNG TELLS OF EXPERIENCES AT HOME AND ABROAD.

Interesting Incidents and the General's Opinions of Distinguished Foreigners and Americans.

(Copyright, 1897, by Frank G. Carpenter.)

WASHINGTON, April 23.—I spent an afternoon this week in chatting with John Russell Young about his experiences with General Grant and with some of the other famous men whom he has known. Mr. Young is the most eminent newspaper correspondent of the day. He is one of our best writers of pure English, and he has for years been one of our chief molders of public opinion. For the past generation his relations with the leading men of the time have been very close. As a boy he knew President Lincoln, Seward and Stanton. While he was correspondent for the New York Herald in London he saw much of Gladstone, Salisbury and Beaconsfield, and also came into contact with Prince Bismarck, Gambetta and other famous men of that time. As our minister to China he made a strong friend of Li Hung Chang, and when the great viceroy made a visit to this country last year he came to Philadelphia and spent a day with Mr. Young's family. It was during his tour around the world with General Grant that John Russell Young first met Li Hung Chang, and to-day there is no man living outside of General Grant's own family who has sustained such close relations to our greatest military hero. Mr. Young is now fifty-six years of age, but his blue eyes are as bright as they were when he began his newspaper career as a copy holder at the age of fifteen in the office of the Philadelphia Press, and his brain is as active as it was when he rode out to the battlefields to report the occurrences of the late civil war. Mr. Young is a delightful talker. His words flow as smoothly in his conversation as in his writing, and his talk is full of striking comparisons.

Our conversation opened with a word about John Hay, who has just gone to England to take Bayard's place as embassador to Great Britain. Mr. Young said:

"I have known Colonel Hay since he came to Washington, now about thirty-six years ago. I had been sent here by the Philadelphia Press. John W. Forney was then the editor. He was also secretary of the Senate, and I was here as his assistant to write for the paper and to do whatever he asked me to do. One of my duties was to carry the papers from the Senate to the White House. John Hay had been brought to Washington by President Lincoln on account for his friendship for Hay's father. Mr. Lincoln wanted to give John the educational advantages of the position, and he had made him one of his private secretaries. I remember well how Colonel Hay looked in the early sixties. He had cheeks as rosy as those of an Irish milkmaid, and he was a rather girlish-looking fellow. President Lincoln, who was quick to discover what there was in men, had seen that Hay had considerable literary ability, and he gave him the answering of such letters and notes as needed especially good wording. He would tell Hay what to say, and would generally sign the letters without changing them. Even in those days John Hay was fond of writing poetry. He often showed me verses which he had written, and now and then would read them to me."

MIDNIGHT CHAT WITH LINCOLN.

"How did President Lincoln impress you, Mr. Young?" I asked.

"He did not seem as great a man to me then as he does now. The canonization of Lincoln did not begin until some time after his death. He had some little idiosyncrasies of pronunciation and action which hid to a certain extent his real greatness. His wonderful modesty and simplicity was partially the cause of his nonappreciation. He was perfectly simple in all of his ways. I can give you an incident which illustrates what I mean. Colonel Forney owned, in addition to the Philadelphia Press, the Washington Chronicle, and I was sometimes left in charge. One night when this was the case we received a Richmond paper, which in some way had been smuggled through the lines, which contained a dispatch stating that Chraleston had been taken. It was very difficult to get such papers, and they often gave us important advance news. This paper came in about 2 o'clock in the morning. As I read it it seemed to me that the President ought to know of the capture of Charleston. I was only a boy, but I decided to go to the White House and tell him. So I took the foreman of the office and together we walked to the White House. We rang the bell, and after a time a messenger opened the door. He told us in response to my request to see Mr. Lincoln that he had long since gone to bed and was now asleep.

"'But,' said I, 'we have important news for him. I have received information which he should have, and I am sure he ought to be waked up to hear it.' After a while the messenger said he would go to the President's bedroom and awaken him. He went. A few moments later the President came down clad in nothing but his night shirt. He asked us to step into the East Room. I remember as he walked in front of us that his long shirt flapped against his legs and that as he sat on the sofa and listened he threw one bare leg over the knee of the other and scratched at the hairy calf. I told him that I had a Richmond newspaper stating that Charleston was taken, whereupon he asked me for the date of the paper. When I replied he said that he had advices two days later than that which stated that the 'bombardment' was still going 'zeelously' on. I remember noticing that he pronounced bombardment as though it was spelled bumbardment and zealously as though its first vowel was a long 'e.' Well, the result was that we found our news to be of no account. The President's spies had given him information in advance of mine, and I was, of course, much mortified to find that I had disturbed the President for no purpose. He put me at my ease, however, saying that he was glad to be awakened at any time to hear good news, even if it was at 4 o'clock instead of 2. He went with me to the door and said good-bye without showing any feeling whatever about being aroused from his sleep after midnight."

LINCOLN AND GRANT.

"What were the relations between President Lincoln and General Grant?" I asked.

"They were perfectly friendly," replied Mr. Young. President Lincoln appreciated Grant's ability, but Grant's military reputation was such that for a time he feared that he might be a candidate against him for renomination as President. I was present during a conversation at the White House in 1864 which showed me that this was the case. I was not well at the time and I had called at the White House with Colonel Forney that I might get an order from President Lincoln to go South. When we arrived we found Secretary Stanton and ex-Senator Morgan, of New York, with the President. After a time the conversation turned to Grant, and President Lincoln said:

"'I am curious to know what that man Grant is going to do down at Vicksburg.